



National Transportation Safety Board

The Chairman's Corner

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Friday, September 23, 2005

Board Meeting Held to Update the State Most Wanted List

At a public Board meeting on September 20, the Board urged States to prohibit inexperienced teenaged drivers from using wireless communications devices while they are learning to drive. This recommendation was added to the Board's "Most Wanted" list of transportation safety improvements.

The recommendation, H-03-8, has been added to the Promote Youth Highway Safety area of the list. Currently 11 States and the District of Columbia have laws related to wireless communication devices and young drivers, but only eight States have laws prohibiting their use by learners in both the permit and intermediate stages.

The Board also removed two recommendations, calling for comprehensive underage drinking and driving or "Age 21" laws, and nighttime driving restrictions for young novice drivers, from the list. Focused advocacy efforts have resulted in more than 80 percent of the States implementing the two recommendations that are part of the Board's Promote Youth Highway Safety issue area.

The Most Wanted list's six issue areas that were discussed on Tuesday are listed below - details on the associated recommendations are available on the Board's website at <http://www.nts.gov/Recs/index.htm> and from the new safety recommendations query on the intranet at <http://inside/safetyrecs/private/QueryPage.aspx>

- Improve Child Occupant Protection [H-96-14]
- Primary Seat Belt Enforcement [H-97-2]
- Promote Youth Highway Safety [H-93-1, H-93-9, H-93-1, H-93-9, H-02-30, H-02-32, H-03-8]
- Eliminate Hard Core Drinking Driving [H-00-26]
- School Bus/Grade Crossing Safety [H-01-38]
- Enhance Recreational Boating Safety [M-93-1, M-98-101]

Acting Chairman Rosenker said, "Clearly, the Board's advocacy efforts have been extremely successful. There have been 238 safety improvements in the States since these recommendations were issued. Each one contributed to a reduction in accidents, injuries and fatalities in their respective States. I ask all the States to work with us to make transportation safety a priority for all our citizens."



Go-Team Launches to Commuter Train Accident in Chicago

On Saturday, September 17, the Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety launched a go-team to investigate a Metra commuter train accident in Chicago, Illinois. Two passengers were killed and 129 were injured in the accident.

The go-team included Acting Chairman Mark Rosenker, Tom Doyle, Ed Dobranetski (IIC), Ruben Payan (Signals), Russ Quimby (Equipment), Dana Sanzo (Survival Factors), Steve Jenner (Human Performance), Dick Hipkind (Track), and George Cochran (Operations), Robert Acetta (Bridge Integrity), Erik Grosz (TDA), Ken Suydam (TDA) and Lauren Peduzzi (PA).

Acting Chairman Mark Rosenker (far right) examines damage to one of the Metra cars involved in the fatal crash which occurred in Chicago on 9/17/05.

Breaking News: Go-Team Launches to Investigate Bus Fire in Dallas

On Friday, September 23, the National Transportation Safety Board dispatched a go-team to the scene of a fire aboard a bus carrying evacuees away from the predicted path of hurricane Rita. The bus was traveling on Interstate 45 near Dallas, Texas, when it became engulfed in flames. Initial reports indicate that there are 24 fatalities.

Investigators from the Board's regional office in Arlington, Texas, are enroute. They will be joined by specialists from NTSB headquarters. The Investigator-in-Charge will be Gary Van Etten. NTSB Chairman-Designate Ellen Engleman Connors will accompany the team and serve as principal spokesperson for the on-scene investigation.

NTSB ACADEMY

Disaster Drill: RFK Stadium Collapses, Hundreds Killed and Injured



Emergency responders from the Washington, D.C., area turn the lobby of the Academy into a mock Family Assistance Center.

RFK stadium turned into a disaster zone when an entire section collapsed onto fans at a rock concert. The stadium lights fell with the structure, igniting a fire. People in the undamaged sections of the stadium, fearing that the rest of the structure could collapse at any time, ran for the exits, causing some to be trampled. Initial news reports indicated that there might be as many as 350 fatalities and over 1,500 injuries. At least 50 of the victims were burned beyond recognition.

This was the scenario faced by 98 emergency responders from a variety of agencies in the Washington, D.C. area on August 16 when, for five hours, the Academy campus was transformed into a Family Assistance & Reunification Center as part of a four-day orientation on how to coordinate and implement a comprehensive assistance system. The drill focused on providing information to family members about their loved ones and facilitating the reunification of families in a secure and comfortable environment in the event of a terrorist attack or civil emergency.

This exercise, which was developed with the NTSB Office of Transportation Disaster Assistance (TDA) and Newberry Associates, a contractor to the Department of Homeland Security, was designed as a model to be used by other localities in the event of a disaster where loved ones become separated. TDA staff, having set up and managed Family Assistance Centers (FACs) at numerous accident sites, briefed the group on what types of things they would need to consider to effectively manage a FAC. Issues include media interaction, ante-mortem interviews, multi-cultural considerations and management of spontaneous volunteers and unsolicited donations.

NTSB staffers joined volunteers from the American Red Cross, the FBI and other organizations to play the role of friends and family members who came to the facility for assistance from the emergency responders. The volunteers presented a range of challenges typical of what would be encountered in a real disaster.

Just two weeks after the exercise, Hurricane Katrina stuck New Orleans, dramatically demonstrating the value of such a center.

In addition to the entire TDA staff, the Academy would like to recognize the following individuals for their willingness to participate in this one-of-a-kind event: **Darrin Broadwater** (SRC), **Yvette Delgado** (ALJ), **Antion Downs** (RE), **Todd Gunther** (AS-MARA), **Emebet Hailu** (RE), **Derrek Hofrichter** (VC), **Terry Williams** (SRC) and **Nicholas Worrell** (SRC).

Barbara Zimmermann Selected as Deputy Director, Office of Administration



Congratulations to Barbara Zimmermann, who has been selected for the position of Deputy Director for the Office of Administration. Barbara served as an Air Traffic Safety Investigator in the Office of Aviation Safety, Operational Factors Division. Before joining the NTSB, Barbara was employed with the Federal Aviation Administration for 21 years and held a number of managerial positions throughout her career. Barbara is a graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and has received her Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautics and Masters degree in Aviation Management.

Ken Suydam Joins TDA Group



Mr. Ken Suydam has taken a new position as Coordinator - Emergency Response Operations as part of the Transportation Disaster Assistance program in the Office of Safety Recommendations and Communications. In this capacity, Ken will be responsible for establishing operating procedures for improved coordination with local responders at major accident launches and other investigations. His extensive experience as an IIC in the Office of Highway Safety combined with previous law enforcement experience makes him uniquely qualified to coordinate with law enforcement, emergency management personnel and other first responders. In addition, he will assist the TDA team with other on-scene duties. Ken will also be assisting with the NTSB Academy courses currently being delivered by TDA. He will continue to be located in the Atlanta office.

Update on Most Wanted Safety Recommendations

Danielle Roeber testified in Massachusetts on multiple hard core drinking driving bills.

The Acting Chairman also sent a letter of support to Indiana for legislation on personal flotation device (PFD) use by children.

Staff discussed safety recommendations with Delaware Governor Ruth Minner at a meeting in Washington.

Staff participated in the Council of State Governments-West and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators conferences and meetings with AAA, the Century Council, and DaimlerChrysler to identify States that may be pursuing legislation related to Safety Board recommendations in 2006.

Constitution Day

September 17 was recognized as Constitution Day. On that date in 1787 the Constitutional Convention ordered the Constitution to be put before Congress and Delegates for ratification. The observation gives NTSB employees the opportunity to review the Oath of Office, renew our understanding of this important document, and re-dedicate ourselves to accomplishment of the NTSB mission, with emphasis on high standards of civil service and the principles of the Constitution that we are sworn to serve.

